

I. ZANGWILL,

The Famous Jewish Novelist
and Dramatist.

ON JUSTICE TO THE JEWS.



"Savonarola Faced the Trial by Fire That He Had Been Challenged to Undergo. Confronted by Most Horrible Tortures He Declared: 'The Things I Have Spoken, I Had Them from God.'"



"Socrates Was Accused of Corrupting the Youth of Athens. What Could Be More Ironical? For He Was the Most Virtuous of the Greeks."



"Louis XVI. (of France), Was Another Victim of Political Conditions. The Only Semblance of a Trial Was a Stormy Debate Before the Convention."



"Charles I. (of England), Arraigned as 'a Traitor and Malicious Leveller of War,' Was Judged Before He Was Tried."

"THERE HAVE BEEN GREAT PERSECUTIONS LIKE THAT OF DREYFUS AND THERE ARE PETTY PERSECUTIONS SUCH AS JEWS REFUSED ADMISSION TO HOTELS."



"SHYLOCK DEMANDING JUSTICE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES, IS THE CRY OF THE JEW FOR JUSTICE THROUGH THE AGES! IT IS THE SYMBOL OF HOW JUSTICE HAS BEEN DENIED HIM."

SHYLOCK—TYPICAL RESULT OF THE MEDIEVAL PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

Shylock, in that splendid dramatic trial scene in "The Merchant of Venice," demanded of the Court:
"If you deny it (justice), let the danger fall upon your charter and your city's freedom."
"If you deny me, file upon your law. There is no force in the decrees of Venice. I stand for judgment. Shall I have it?"
"It is the cry of the Jew for justice through the ages!"

ISRAEL ZANGWILL, the noted Jewish author of England, who is now in America preparing to put his famous novel, "The Children of the Ghetto," on the stage, yesterday discussed for the Journal the outbreak of prejudice against the Jews in this country by excluding them from seashore hotels, and the Jewish persecution abroad, and compared the Dreyfus case with other famous trials of history, where race and religious prejudices have prevented justice from being done. Here are his statements:

WHAT a symbol of Jewish persecution is presented by two cases:
Dreyfus, the most dramatic trial in real history.
Shylock's, the most real trial in dramatic history. Dreyfus, crying for justice in a modern court in a modern republic.
Shylock demanding the same justice in medieval times, though for a less noble purpose.
It is the cry of the Jew for justice through the ages!
It is the symbol of how justice has been denied him. There have been great persecutions like that of Dreyfus—and now there are petty little persecutions. Look about you. See the way Jews are refused admission to hotels.
This is just another phase of the old time persecution.
You call it "prejudice" now. That sounds better. But it is the same thing.
Yet you are amazed that France should persecute Dreyfus.
It is so much easier to criticize the same fault when found in others.
Your abstract ideas of justice are right. Only it is hard to apply them right at home.
It makes me feel and when I see these things in a republic which is founded on a high idea of equality and citizenship.
But I love America—I love France—for the principles in human freedom that they stand for. But this very affection makes me the more pained by their shortcomings.
In lynch law, which sometimes breaks out in America, I am grieved to say, there is a certain sort of justice, an intent to punish the guilty; but if France does not care for even a semblance of justice, because a Jew is the victim, then she is worse than a

lynch law community!
This whole Dreyfus trial from the beginning is an example of the persecution of the Jews through the ages.
Though imprisoned in Ghettos, ostracized by race prejudices, bound down by unjust laws, when the chance is given him he rises to the greatest height of manhood.
Nothing can keep him down.
In Dreyfus's acquittal will be shown an immense step forward in the world's progress and sense of justice.
In the trial of Dreyfus, it is not Dreyfus that is on trial, it is France. Or rather it is justice itself.
It is an astonishing case where a man in the dock is trying the court that tries him. He is trying the whole Government of France.
For if a nation cannot carry out justice it must cease to exist as a nation.
Shylock in that splendid dramatic trial scene in "The Merchant of Venice," declared this principle when he demanded of the Court:
"If you deny it (justice), let the danger fall upon your charter and your city's freedom."
"If you deny me, file upon your law. There is no force in the decrees of Venice. I stand for judgment; answer, shall I have it?"
I, as a Jew, do not care for Dreyfus as a Jew, as much as I care for the survival of justice in France.
But if justice fails in France, if a republic is not capable of maintaining a standard of justice of medieval oligarchies, then we have come back to medieval conditions.
As I have said, there never was such a dramatic trial in human history as that of Dreyfus.
The telegraph makes the whole world an audience in attendance upon it.
What is more remarkable, there never was an incident in human history which had so many eyes focussed upon it.
So, besides being the most dramatic trial on record, Dreyfus's is the biggest trial before the biggest audience.
Modern inventions, the universal press, with the work of artists as well as of writers, make it almost as if the whole civilized world were in attendance upon that French court at Rennes.
But the greatest trial in human history was that of Jesus before Pontius Pilate.
Yet in many respects it was the very opposite of the Dreyfus case.
Few people witnessed it, and of those who did few thought it of any great importance.
Anatole France, in writing a novel about it, toward the end of the book makes one of his characters say to

another:
"Don't you remember Jesus, who was tried for calling himself King of the Jews?"
"No, I don't remember him," was the answer.
This shows how little importance was attributed to the trial of Christ at the time it occurred.
Even the Gospels themselves giving an account of the trial were not written until about a century after the trial.
Compare this with the Dreyfus case, in which every minute detail is telegraphed around the world the instant it occurs and elaborated into columns and whole pages of newspaper comment.
This shows how modern life has developed the spirit of contemporaneity.
At one time in Paris the objection to opening up the Dreyfus case again was that the affair was "chassez le juge." That is, it was already judged, and so must stay judged.
A witty Parisian writer said the same thing might be said of Christ's trial.
But here resemblance between Christ's trial and Dreyfus's ceases.
I cannot in the least degree compare these two characters.
I do not look upon Dreyfus as a particularly noble character.
Dreyfus is a mere victim of injustice.
That does not make him a martyr. He has not suffered physical pain.
He has not died for a cause. His only heroism has been in firmly bearing up under his mental suffering.
But if Dreyfus was not a noble character before his persecution began he has shown some noble qualities under this ordeal.
At the prison in France, after Dreyfus was brought back from Devil's Island, his counsel, M. Labori, was explaining to him all the details and political plots and intrigues in his case; for, singularly enough, Dreyfus was then the only man in the world who did not understand the Dreyfus case. After three days spent in laying before his client the whole matter, Dreyfus replied:
"I have been the victim of a conspiracy, but I bear malice to no one, and if, in the coming court-martial, I am again condemned, then we will begin the fight all over again."
In this Dreyfus has shown a Christian spirit of forgiveness, which I call a Jewish spirit, because Jesus was a Jew.
You Americans think it strange that a Jew, or, in fact, any man should be so persecuted and have to make such a fight for justice in France at this period. No; it is not strange.
The great trials of history have nearly all been the ones where justice has not been meted out.

That is because they have aroused the most violent human passions. Whenever passion is aroused you cannot expect justice.
It has always been so and will always be so.
Look at the trial of Socrates.
He was accused of corrupting the youth of Athens. What could be more ironical? For he was the most virtuous of the Greeks.
His teachings were the purest ethics.
They were almost the only uplifting influence of a degenerate age.
Not on this charge, which applied better to any of his judges than to him, he was tried.
He pleaded his own case. But, instead of conciliating his judges, he angered them by his reproaches and by his arraignment of the sophistry and vice of the times.
He was condemned to drink the hemlock poison.
Then come down to later times.
There was the trial of Savonarola, the Christian martyr of Florence.
Florence, Italy, yes, all Papal Europe, was aroused, flamed by it.
Savonarola was a true martyr, because he did not consider himself such.
He faced the trial by fire that he had been challenged to undergo.
Confronted by most horrible tortures, he declared: "The things I have spoken, I had them from God."
But it was clear to impartial people at that time that he must die, not for any crime, but because he had made himself "inconvenient" to existing religious powers.
Not a shadow of political crime had been proved against him.
No stain had been found in his private conduct.
Savonarola's worst enemy, the Pope, could not raise charge of heresy against him.
So it was generally accepted by shrewd men that Florentine justice had done a clumsy job when Savonarola's death was decided upon.
But he was killed, nevertheless—strangled—and his body burned in the public square, where all the people could witness it.
There is a sort of similarity between the trial of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, and the Dreyfus case.
The evidence was all circumstantial and religious prejudice in both.
In Mary Stuart's trial forged letters were the chief evidence. Those letters implicated her in the plot of Anthony Babington to assassinate Queen Elizabeth.
Mary's righteous denial that she had never written nor even seen the letters attributed to her was ignored. A commission was appointed to try her.
Her requests for the aid of counsel, for a trial before

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